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C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 000534

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/14/2017

TAGS: PINS ASEC CASC GV

SUBJECT: SITREP NO. 4: MILITARY UNREST, MAY 14, 1530 HOURS  
GMT

REF: CONAKRY 529 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Jackson McDonald. Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Conakry remains calm. Traffic patterns are normal. Schools, shops, stores, and offices are open. Some businesses in the Matam district, the site of looting on the night of May 12-13, remain closed.

¶2. (C) This morning, May 14, Minister of Defense General Arafan Camara formally relinquished his position to General Bailo Diallo at a brief ceremony at Camp Samory Toure in downtown Conakry where the Ministry of Defense is located. The turnover unfolded without incident.

¶3. (C) At about the same time, General Diarra Camara, newly appointed Chief of Defense Staff, arrived in Conakry by road from Kankan. He is supposed to succeed General Kerfalla Camara at a ceremony tomorrow morning, May 15, also at Camp Samory Toure.

¶4. (C) According to unconfirmed reports, on the night of May 13-14, Chinese-trained commandos arrested six military personnel identified as leading the protest movement. In addition, according to MOD sources, approximately 100 military personnel have been arrested for looting and incarcerated at the Red Berets barracks in downtown Conakry.

¶5. (C) The anti-gang police informed the RSO that they will conduct joint police-military patrols to prevent renewed looting. The civilian police will patrol the warehouse districts, but they will step aside and let the military deal with any military looters. (There is a long history of rivalry between the police and military in Guinea, and the police do not want to find themselves in the position of arresting military personnel. We wonder why the paramilitary gendarmes are not playing this law-enforcement role rather than the civilian police twinned with the regular military.)

¶6. (C) This morning, May 14, additional Chinese-trained soldiers arrived at Camp Alpha Yaya. These soldiers have reportedly said they will be responsible for escorting President Lansana Conte to Camp Alpha Yaya to speak with other military personnel tomorrow.

¶7. (C) While the civilian population has remained relatively silent over the last week, the union confederation issued a statement on May 11 urging the military to pursue dialogue and non-violent protest in the pursuit of its goals. Prime Minister Kouyate echoed this sentiment in his address to the nation on May 12. The Prime Minister emphasized the concessions the government has made in response to the soldiers' demands. Kouyate implored the soldiers to make any legitimate demands solely through non-violent means. He deplored the current escalation that has already resulted in six deaths, 70 persons injured, and significant property

destruction.

¶ 8. (C) During a brief conversation with the Ambassador this morning, Prime Minister Kouyate intimated that President (General) Lansana Conte was now taking the lead in resolving this dispute within the military. That said, we detect that the rank-and-file are beginning to lose confidence in President Conte, who has stood them up repeatedly.

¶ 9. (C) The U.S. Mission remains open and fully staffed. All American are safe. We continue to monitor the situation closely.

MCDONALD